

AGING SERVICES VOLUNTEER VOICES

"YOUR COMMUNITY IS CALLING"

SUMMER/FALL 2004

Volunteers Contribute To Success Of LifeLong Living Festival!

The 10th Annual Aging Services LifeLong Living Festival was an enormous success! The new date and place (Saturday, June 17th at The Abbott Sports Complex) didn't keep people from attending this terrific annual event that features products and services designed to improve the lives of Older Adults and their families. This year 2,500 people (1,000 more attendees than our previous high) attended. Events like this don't happen without a crew of dedicated people, and our volunteers really helped make the difference. Thirty RSVP Volunteers served as greeters, survey-takers, and staffers at the Aging Services "Celebration Station," "Information Station," and Lifetime Health's "Senior Fitness Testing." As we made the rounds, we saw lots of senior volunteers helping out in various booths including AARP Nebraska, and Aging Services TRIAD among others. If you want to be placed on a list to lend your talents to next year's festival, call Lily Hans at 441-6103. Many thanks to those of you who helped make this year's event a day to remember!

Volunteers Assist Disaster Victims

Thanks to the many volunteers who helped after the recent tornados in Southeastern Nebraska. Our state was fortunate to have Lincoln's own Volunteer Partners open and operate the EVC (Emergency Volunteer Center) where spontaneous volunteers could come to be signed in and trained. Hundreds of volunteers from across the country came each day to help. They worked cleaning up debris, helping with food and water distribution, served as van drivers, ham radio operators, and many brought backhoes and their work gloves. They assisted with paperwork, answered phones...basically, doing anything that needed to be done.



It was amazing to see the teams of volunteers ready to be transported from the EVC. They were there to help a property owner clean up his/her field, to help a homeowner in Hallam sort through the piles of debris for whatever remained of their possessions, to lend a hand to help the Red Cross distribute food. There were Moms and Dads who brought their kids to help, showing them what happens when people care about each other. They worked alongside a group of college kids or a farmer dressed in overalls wanting to show support, thankful his own property had been



spared. Thousands of people donated supplies and money to be given to storm victims. Thank you to all who contributed in any way, the volunteer spirit is miraculous and continues to shine through disaster!

If you would be willing to help Volunteer Partners in the event of another disaster call 435-2100.



Pershing Elementary: Foster Grandparent Judy Guynan received recognition as a Ventures in Partnerships Outstanding Volunteer Award from her volunteer site Pershing Elementary. Grandma Judy is pictured with Principal Paula Baker who made the nomination. Mrs. Baker appreciates the collaborative partnership Grandma Judy has formed with staff to support student learning. Grandma Judy volunteers 20 hours per week as a Foster Grandparent with Mrs. Painter a second grade reading teacher. She is also at school each morning at 7:45 a.m. to greet students with her wonderful smile and assists students over the noon hour in the office to make calls home. Grandma Judy enjoys the energy of the students

and finds they keep her young. It is challenging for staff to make sure each student is given enough individualized attention and Grandma Judy helps to make that happen. We are very lucky to have her.



Pershing is fortunate to have two additional Foster Grandparents,



Helen Curfman and Margie Kelly. Grandma Helen helps with Kindergarten, First and a Fourth Grade Classroom. Grandma Margie helps with Kindergarten and a Fifth Grade Classroom. The grandparent's skills and extra hands help make Pershing Elementary a very good place for students to learn.

American Heart Walk: Grandma Lu raises \$167.00 for the annual American Heart Walk on May 15. After experiencing triple by-pass surgery, it is a joy to participate in the Heart Walk. She enjoys the energy and enthusiasm of the

second grade students at Everett Elementary. Teacher Claire Thomas says, "Grandma Lu is a wonderful advocate of the children's academic and social development and she brightens up the whole building just by her presence." Each morning, Grandma Lu helps to transport Alex to the second level in the elevator. She helps Alex in the classroom by reading to him and also during class discussions and lessons. Alex loves being with his friends, and Grandma Lu has helped make his time more enjoyable.



"A smile is an inexpensive way to improve your looks almost instantly." ... Bits & Pieces
"I've seen what a good laugh can do. It can transform tears in to hope." ... Bob Hope

RSVP Recognition Dinner Date Change: In our last newsletter, we told you the Recognition Dinner, celebrating 30 years of RSVP, would be on September 9th.... Due to a scheduling error, we are moving the dinner **to Friday, September 17th**. Hopefully, this doesn't inconvenience too many of you, and with this amount of notice that you can adjust your schedules. Volunteers who have turned in their calendars and completed at least three months of volunteering by June 30, 2004 will be invited to the dinner.



Evaluation Results: Thanks to all of you who took the time to answer our evaluation survey. Of the 725 evaluations sent out, 154 were returned, that's 21%, a pretty good return. Almost all of you were very pleased with your placements. Most of you felt we communicated pretty well. A feeling of being needed and useful, giving back to the community and a belief in the purpose of the organization were the top reasons for volunteering. When it came to the benefits that RSVP provides, it seemed many of you didn't realize that RSVP carries supplemental insurance on all volunteers while they are volunteering.... The coverage includes accident insurance, were you to have an accident while performing your volunteer duties, excess automobile liability, if you, as a driver, were sued as the result of performing your duties, and liability coverage, if you were liable for bodily injury or property damage arising from performing your duties. Now you know! Most of you enjoy the newsletter and also the Recognition Dinner and only a third thought mileage reimbursement was important. As far as making volunteering easier, many felt we needed to get more public exposure, and communicate our opportunities more. The training you felt most important to help with volunteering was computers. The question about community needs was as varied as the sites where people volunteer, but getting more older people to volunteer, helping in the schools, mentoring, providing transportation, helping the disabled and lonely, getting food and meals to the needy ranked high. Generally, assisting with the basic human needs got the most response. Finally, your responses seemed to indicate that you enjoyed other programs of our Aging Services, Travelogue, day trips, reduced price tickets, exercise and computer classes, handyman and insurance assistance. Overall, it seemed we are doing a pretty good job, but have room for improvement and we will be working to get better with your help!

Importance of calendars: We realize that it is often difficult to remember to record the hours that you contribute at your various volunteer sites, but it is so important to the RSVP program. The federal government reimburses our program according to the number of volunteers and hours reported. I know you all do more than you report, but we can't prove it to Congress unless we have your calendars. Please put all your hours on your calendars and return them to us as soon as possible.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

New Volunteer Opportunities: ♦The Information Booth at the State Office Building is looking for volunteers on weekdays and ♦the State Capitol would like to have volunteers on the weekends during the summer. ♦Assistance with telephoning and surveying is needed at the Police Department. ♦The Lancaster County Community Corrections would like volunteers to make reminder calls to Attorney General's Office needs help answering Bank needs help sorting food stuffs. ♦Bryan LGH information desk volunteers, surgical and ICU for more volunteers interested in preventing elder individuals who have up coming court appearances. ♦The elderly consumers questions and concerns. ♦The Food East AND West have need of flower deliverers, patient escorts, host/hostesses and clerical assistance. ♦TRIAD is looking abuse and identifying scams and frauds. ♦Friendly visitors are always needed by Project HELP to bring socialization and care to homebound elderly. ♦Lincoln Literacy, ♦Meals on Wheels and ♦Lincoln Action Program always have volunteer opportunities. If you or someone you know has some time and wants to have a rewarding experience, we can get them connected. For more information about these and the many other volunteer opportunities we have, please call 441-7026.



In our culture, people don't like to talk about, plan for, or even think about death. It is the giant elephant in the room which we all try to avoid. But, if someone you loved has died, the one thing that just might help is to talk about that person. It feels good to be able to share stories, to cry or even laugh as you remember good times.

Everyone experiences losses over the lifespan and grief should be seen as integral to the life process. Each loss we face during our lifetime necessitates dealing with the resulting grief in order to grow and move on. How we handle the various grief situations determines the person we will be when we get to the other side of the experience. Trained Widowed Persons Service Volunteers are there to listen, understand and help you with this process.

Author and grief counselor Mark Hundley gives 10 guidelines for healthy grief work which include:

- ♦Give yourself permission to grieve and mourn.
- ♦Understand and work within the grief process in order to heal.
- ♦Recognize that grief is personal, unique and very important.
- ♦Be aware of the well-meaning, but sometimes misguided, advice of others.
- ♦Be aware of unhealthy coping systems and their potential effects.
- ♦Talk about your grief and feelings.
- ♦Be aware of and work within your physical and emotional limits.
- ♦Develop and use your support systems.
- ♦Make use of rituals and memorialize your loss.
- ♦Embrace your grief and heal by learning how to move onto the next thing.



WPS volunteers give hope to the newly widowed. They are proof that life goes on, that they have moved far enough along in the grief process to be able to help someone else. **Call 441-7028** to: Request an Outreach Volunteer, refer a widowed relative or friend, inquire about being a volunteer, or to get information/location on outreach or social groups.

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